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# THOUGHTS

ON

# MODERN MISSIONARY ENTERPRIZE,

WITH THE

OUTLINES OF A PLAN

FOR

GIVING GREATER EFFICIENCY

TO

# MISSIONS IN GENERAL.

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BY JAMES JOHNSTON,
PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH, FRAMINGHAM.

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And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.—MATTHEW xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

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BY JAMES JOHNSTON,

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# PREFACE.

The following thoughts on modern missionary enterprize, are earnestly recommended to the consideration of the followers of Jesus Christ, among the various evangelical denominations who are engaged on one common principle as missionary bodies in the propagation of the gospel among the heathen. The importance of the topic will be considered sufficient to justify the inquiry which I have made as to the working of the system now in general operation; and as its results, after an experience of half a century, give no very good ground to anticipate a larger amount of success than has already been obtained from it, the plan I propose for adoption will, at least, I hope, meet with a candid and a prayerful consideration from the friends of religion.

Besides, it is high time that the present fiscal management of missionary corporations should be put an end to. Since their organization they have proceeded upon the eleemosynary principle; and highly objectionable as this is in a case where it is admitted there is no lack of wealth in the churches, but an indisposition to part with it; this evil is increased by the circumstance of almost every such organization operating beyond its means, expending far more than its income, and deeply involved in debt, and thus doing in the cause of religion what would not be expedient or justifiable in the ordinary transactions of life. I ask, should we do evil that good may come?

The eleemosynary system, to which I have alluded as the basis of modern missionary effort has filled me even to loathing when I have read of the rebuffs to which a man like Fuller, the first Secretary of the Serampore Missionary Society, was subjected while going about in quest of subscriptions for its support; and the same

feeling has been excited towards it when I have heard of its requiring or countenancing the females of England to forsake their proper sphere, the piety of home, to solicit from door to door donations to a cause which the churches themselves were fully competent to sustain; while in our own country the continual outcry for money from missionary directors is heard on every hand and by all sorts of voices; by speeches, by pointed appeals in the pulpit and out of it, just as if the people of God had nothing to do with missionary enterprize but to give of their money to the *few individuals* who, under cover of an unscriptural system, have become its sole directors and managers. Now such things ought not to be, as will be shown in the course of remark contained in the following essay. Neither should we hear about the onerous nature of missionary direction. Why should men voluntarily impose upon themselves duties which they avow they consider to be onerous, "who," to use the language of the President of the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, the Rev. D. Sharp, D. D., in his published letter addressed to the Rev. B. Stow of Boston, "have grown gray in the unpaid, but mind-exhausting and time-sacrificing cause of missions," when by the adoption of a scriptural system of enterprize, the burden of it, if it be a burden, would be laid upon the shoulders of those whom Jesus Christ intended should bear it in the churches of his saints, in that privacy of action in which all are brethren, and where no supremacy is permitted or is claimed.

With individual characters, however, I have no fault to find. My quarrel is with religious missionary corporations. I may seem, it is possible, to some persons, to have singled out that of the denomination with which I have the honor of being connected to particular animadversion. But this arises simply from the circumstance of my being better acquainted with its general proceedings than I am with the missionary direction of other corporations, while I am satisfied that they all bear one common character. Besides, the decidedly independent character of the Baptist churches, and of which we justly boast, demands from their members that this independence should not be tamely surrendered or be suffered to be usurped as is the case in missionary organizations where a decided display of aristocratic influence is permitted to subvert this independence, and a pecuniary qualification made the prerequisite of membership and the basis of a system professing to work out the great commission of preaching the gospel to the

heathen, but in fact usurping the action of the churches of Christ, as independent missionary bodies, in this most important particular.

The inconsistent character of such organizations as I have alluded to with the associations of the New Testament, that is, the churches of Christ, must be seen in a moment when viewed in the light in which I have now exhibited it; and the sooner it is abandoned the better for one in strict accordance with the will of Jesus Christ. The question is, is a civil establishment of a portion of a religious denomination for doing the work of preaching the gospel to the heathen permitted by the New Testament, when it is the duty of individual churches to do so? or if that question will not settle the matter, I may be permitted to ask, can there be any other organization more perfect or more adapted to answer every purpose which the Lord had in view by the dispensation of the gospel, than that which is the result of his infinite wisdom, the organization of a New Testament church?

It is astonishing how easily men's minds are led astray from the simplicity which is in Christ, if they be but brought under the influence of that which has become popular, never inquiring whether it is based upon the authority of God, or even whether it can stand the simplest examination. A writer in the Christian Review for September, 1842, (article, The Great Commission,) page 392, describes the theory of missionary organization. He supposes a number of individuals savingly brought under the influence of the gospel. "They are formed into a church—And as soon as this first church has been instrumental in calling into existence others in its vicinity, they combine their influence again for the same good object, *the furtherance of the gospel.*" But I would inquire, why should not the churches so formed, imitate the example of the mother church in her single-handed effort, and seek, like her, individually to extend the gospel? Is it likely they would be less successful than their progenitor? or is it the nature of christianity to be less powerful and influential the more it is diffused in society? If not, why then combine together in an association which they find from experience weakens rather than strengthens their power of doing good? It is true such an association may embrace men of great talents, wealth and respectability in the churches, but we might as well talk of increasing the power of an army to conquer and subdue a territory which it had invaded, by subtracting from its various battalions their colonels and staff and other officers, leaving behind

in the camp the rank and file and non-commissioned officers, and sending the former forth with the general in command to conquer and subdue, by the splendor of their epaulettes, the gorgeousness of their uniform, and the authority of their titles, rank and commissions.

The attention that is being given to the subject of missions at the present time, encourages me to hope that something will be done towards effecting a reformation in the working of the great commission. The various associations of young men formed for the express purpose of missionary inquiry in this country is encouraging, and I trust their inquiries will be directed to practical results rather than to topics which may be termed the romance of missions, or to philosophical investigations on the subject, and that as christians and lovers of the Saviour and philanthropists in the noblest sense of the term, they will engage heart and hand without delay in seeking the propagation of the gospel by the individual action of the churches of which they are members, without the intervention of an agency such as is afforded by missionary corporations.

It will be to me a source of deep regret if the spirit which has led to the formation of young men's societies for missionary inquiry be permitted to evaporate, and lose itself in the very trivial matter of patronizing lectures drilled and bored from encyclopediæs and similar sources, or in listening to mere missionary declamation from popular speakers, and then to be embodied in one of the multiplied forms under which dollars and cents are collected in support of a system which cries give, give, and never can be satisfied, possessing all the clamorousness of mendicity, without the dignity and grace of a poor, but virtuous vital christianity.

If Christ is to entreat and plead, "in forma pauperis," this can only be done by His true and proper representatives, the churches of His saints; but I have submitted a plan, which, if adopted, will encircle Him with a halo of glory in His churches, instead of exhibiting him as hitherto like a Lazarus fed with the crumbs falling from our tables.

# THOUGHTS

ON

# MODERN MISSIONARY ENTERPRIZE.

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To the mind of the christian, awake to duty and to a deep sense of responsibility, the present condition of the heathen world is truly appalling; for although eighteen centuries have elapsed since our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ commissioned his churches to evangelize the world, more than three fourths of its vast population are at this moment ready to perish and to sink into hell, enveloped in all the darkness, degradation and misery of idolatry.

During the last half century something has been attempted to ameliorate this fearful condition, but it must be confessed that the slow progress made in its amelioration is exceedingly discouraging, for after every exertion during this long period by various denominations of orthodox christians, all that has been subtracted from the vast ocean of idolatry, is but as a drop; and we are warranted in the conclusion that unless some important changes be effected in the agency or means employed to convert the heathen world, that so the bright predictions of scripture prophecy may be fully realized, it is as vain and useless to expect it from modern missionary organizations as the attempt would be to drain one of our large inland lakes by the help of a bowl or of a tea-spoon.

I am well aware that not a few are of opinion that missionary effort has been eminently successful, and this opinion has been in-

dustriously circulated and made the subject of gratulation by those interested in its management. But while I fully respond to all that has resulted of benefit to the world, and to the unutterable, the priceless value of the human soul, and shall concede that the salvation of *one* soul is worth all, and more than all that has ever been expended, or can be expended in the shape of human effort, still this must not satisfy our expectations or our desires. We are to be guided in these, by the expressed will of God, by the bountiful nature of the provision of the gospel for man's necessities as a sinner, and by a due regard to the glory of Christ in the extension of His kingdom, to whom is promised the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.

If we refer to the official recorded statistics of some of the principal missionary societies, it will be found that so far from the success of modern missionary enterprize being a cause of gratulation, the results of their labors call rather for deep humiliation before God. For instance, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was instituted in Jan. 1810, and its communicants in 1839 only numbered 7,311. The Baptist Board for Foreign Missions was instituted in the year 1814, and its communicants in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, in 1842, only amounted to 3,700 persons.

Again, that magnificent missionary organization, the London Missionary Society, embracing in its direction and membership persons from all the various evangelical denominations of Great Britain, and formed in the year 1795, after an existence of nearly fifty years, had only in 1842, 13,156 communicants in the various quarters of the world. And yet this pitiful amount of success, with upwards of 1,000 persons employed as missionaries, in the service of these three powerful evangelical missionary societies, is to be regarded as a cause of gratulation!! To me it is a cause of utter astonishment that any one can be found who can view these results in any degree satisfactory.

What would the primitive christians have thought of such a measure of success, notwithstanding the world was up in arms against them and the religion they propagated? In some of the heathen cities of Greece or Asia, it is not improbable there were found, within a few years after the ascension of Christ, a far greater number of converts to christianity than all these put together, as

the result of thirty to fifty years' toil on the part of those three large corporate missionary bodies.

If the Lord's hand be not shortened that it cannot save, and if, as doubtless it will be admitted, that the spirit of the commission as recorded in the gospel by Matthew xxviii, 18-20, demands that all who participate in the blessings of the gospel themselves, are bound to communicate these blessings to others, it becomes imperative, then, upon all such to inquire into the causes which may have led to such a fearful condition as that which the heathen world still presents at this moment, and which are impeding its evangelization.

It is to be regretted that such an inquiry has never been sufficiently made, and to this very circumstance may be attributed not a little of the apathy displayed with regard to the present condition and future prospects of the heathen. That a spirit of indifference to the condition of the heathen prevails to a most alarming extent cannot be doubted, while it is impossible to justify it upon any christian principle; and any inquiry which might have a tendency towards the removal of this apathy and culpable indifference towards the condition of the heathen, ought to be hailed with satisfaction.

However important the inquiry therefore is, it is not my intention to attempt anything like such an investigation as the importance of the case demands. The limits of our pamphlet will not admit of it. But I may be permitted to affirm that the present condition of the heathen world does not arise from the following considerations.

1. From the sovereignty of God, so as to exclude culpability from ourselves; for the sovereignty of God has not been made the subject of experiment, and cannot be until the gospel be fully preached to the heathen, when its rejection or its reception by them will then, and not until then, indicate the sovereignty of God without our culpability in the matter. It is the duty of the churches to communicate the gospel to every creature, leaving the results to the sovereignty of God in its saving application to the hearts and lives of those to whom it is declared. The doctrine of the Divine sovereignty, has no more to do with our duty in sending the gospel to the heathen, than the scriptural doctrine of election with the duty of every man who hears the gospel to

embrace it and to believe it. To shelter ourselves under the one or the other, as relieving us from the weighty obligations these considerations involve, must bring upon us an awful amount of guilt in the sight of God, who has so mercifully interposed in our behalf, and in behalf of the heathen; and as God has so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life, it is our duty to communicate the gospel, in the hope of its cordial reception by all to whom it is addressed.

2. Neither does the present condition of the heathen arise from any lack of adaptation in the gospel itself, to their present condition and circumstances. These are the same as the human family has always presented, while the gospel itself is as unchangeable as its author.

3. Neither does the present condition of the heathen arise from the refusal of the Lord to work with His people. The partial success which has accompanied missionary effort during the last half century, proves that God will always work when His people work. It is affirmed by the author of one of the gospels, the evangelist Mark, after recording the commission to preach the gospel to every creature, that the Lord worked with them in doing so; and looking at the history of the propagation of christianity, it is evident that until the church ceased to work out this commission, He ceased not to bless the world with His renewing and sanctifying grace. The moment the churches of Christ resume their proper work, that moment the Lord will make bare His holy arm and work with them as in days of old.

4. Neither does the present condition of the heathen world arise from the circumstance, that much of intellectual greatness has not been called into requisition, in the evangelizing of the heathen. Supposing this was true, God does not require it, and for this very reason, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." He has wisely determined that an agency bearing another stamp than that of intellectual greatness shall accomplish the mighty object. "But God," says the apostle, "hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things

which are despised hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence."

Now this was the character of primitive instrumentality; and if so, the low standard which has been supposed as marking the character of modern instrumentality must not be considered as one of the causes for the present deplorable condition of the heathen in the nineteenth century after Christ. I fear the error rather lies in an opposite direction, and that intellectual qualifications have been more prized and sought after in the missionary of the cross, than the wants of the heathen world demanded, while God was determining by frequent demonstration the wisdom of His determination as to the character of human instrumentality, by causing the simple presentation of the story of His love, by the gift of His Son as a suffering Saviour, to find its way into the hearts of the most savage and untutored tribes of earth. Told in artless simplicity, and clothed with its own native charms, it has been embraced and welcomed by the stupid Greenlander, the voluptuous Polynesian, the gentle Hindoo and the ferocious inhabitant of New Zealand; while men from the most degraded tribes of Africa have held out their sable hands to God imploring mercy, all conquered and subdued by the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. The present condition of the heathen does not arise from the inadequacy of the means placed at our disposal.

There is no lack of means, so far as numerical strength is concerned, in connection with mental, physical or spiritual advantages. The sacramental host comprises hundreds of thousands, I might say, millions, who all ought to feel and acknowledge their personal obligations to aid in the evangelizing of the heathen world. I question whether there were so much of numerical strength in the primitive churches at the time they achieved so much, as there is at the present day, and yet at no very distant period from the promulgation of christianity, the heathen priesthood were compelled to acknowledge that their temples were depopulated, and their idols famished.

In the case of the apostle Paul, we have a specimen of the prowess of the primitive churches, who, as the apostle of the Gentiles, carried the gospel into all parts of the known world, achiev-

ing almost single-handed those bloodless victories of the cross of Christ with a celerity and a power utterly unknown in modern times.

And who was the apostle Paul? It is true he was an accredited ambassador of Christ, and the seals of his apostleship he undoubtedly displayed by his miraculous endowments. But he had about him many drawbacks. He was not supported by a powerful missionary corporation, but only commended to the grace of God by the church which sent him forth to labor, and when sent forth, receiving more rebukes from the world than favors, so that the apostleship itself, were it to be had upon such terms in the present day as he possessed it in his, it would go a begging for lack of candidates. At Corinth he was a tentmaker, and in Rome and elsewhere a prisoner, everywhere presenting a picture of external human misery, "in weariness, and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness;" and yet he never dropped the missionary character, but calmly threaded his weary way through this world's miseries, "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, strong in faith, giving glory to God."

And wherein lay his power of endurance and of suffering, and the secret of his enlarged benevolence, which prompted him to do so much, and to suffer so much? It was the love of Christ constrained him, because he thus judged, "that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again."

But there are other means placed under our control than merely numerical strength, which gives us a superiority over primitive laborers in the enterprize of evangelizing the heathen. The world was not blessed with those arts of life which tend so greatly to facilitate the intercourse of mankind. Why, Paul's voyage in the Mediterranean sea and journey to Rome, which occupied so many weeks, is now accomplished in a few days, and with little or no hazard, while the most distant portions of the world are visited with comfort and safety, and a celerity wholly unknown in primitive times. Besides, we have that mighty engine, the press, far more than counterbalancing the gift of tongues on Pentecost; while to give power to all these physical advantages, evangelical christianity,

embracing its hundreds of thousands of communicants, speaks but one common language, both in the eastern and western hemispheres, developing a power unknown to primitive times, and of the advantages of which, evangelization has not yet reaped the benefit, by reason of the sectarian spirit which, in spite of the teachings of Christ and his apostles, everywhere prevails.

If the present condition of the heathen world cannot with truth be attributed to any of the causes specified, to what then is it to be attributed? I answer, to the following causes.

1. To the total absence of zeal in regard to the diffusion of the gospel among the heathen. A listless indifference is characteristic of the age, notwithstanding all that is attempted to rouse the dormant energies of christians. But to the present system of missionary enterprize may be justly attributed a large portion of this indifference. By the present system, it is everybody's business, and nobody's business to evangelize the heathen. It lacks individuality, and hence there is no room for the operation of zeal in its behalf. It never disturbs the conscience. A man may be aroused to inquire what is wanted of him with regard to the heathen. He is answered, give us money; that is all that is required of you. And is it possible he can consider missionary effort, as far as he is concerned, but a thing of "foreign concernment?" He has no voice in the appointment of the missionary, nor anything to do with the selection of the field of labor; the correspondence with the missionary is out of his hands; it is conducted by persons with whom he has no acquaintanceship; in short he has as little to do with the evangelization of the heathen, as he has with the government of his country, nay, much less,—and I ask, is it possible in such circumstances, can that zeal exist, the absence of which is shedding at present so destructive an influence over the interests of the heathen. It is impossible. The unalterable laws of the human mind forbid its existence.

But this lack of zeal is not only wanting in the churches, but I fear it is wanting, to a great extent in the missionary. Doubtless there are many exceptions, but no man should be engaged as a missionary, no matter what are his attainments, who is destitute of it. The ears of all such should ring with the words of our Lord, "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his

own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" and thus impelled, press forward under its influence into the depths of this world's miseries, disregarding all earthly considerations, exclaiming, if I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave unto the roof of my mouth.

In no cause, can anything like distinguished success be anticipated, where zeal in its behalf is wanting; and this holds equally so in the propagation of the gospel. Without it, mental endowments are as nothing. It is in fact, indispensable to the christian missionary. With it, the primitive christians "turned the world upside down." Let one man be found with it in his possession, absorbing his time, his thoughts, his pursuits, let the enlargement of Christ's kingdom be the ruling passion, and that man, if placed in the missionary field, will achieve more than a host, if it may be, of well informed, intellectual men, trained up and fitted with all the classical endowments of the age, but destitute of that absorbing zeal which characterized the individual. Such was John the Baptist, that missionary pioneer of the Lamb of God. "He was a burning and a shining light," and his success comported with the scriptural delineation of his character, for fervent quenchless zeal.

Contrast a Francis Xavier with the generality of men despatched as missionaries of the cross in the present day. Instead of offering themselves on the altar of devoted love to God and man, they are in too many cases, it is to be feared, swayed by a variety of motives, independent entirely of that zeal which should induce to so holy and so noble a consecration, and which Xavier so conspicuously displayed. With no opposition to encounter, like the illustrious individual to whom I have alluded, months are devoted to preparation and to outfit. A companion is selected. The voyage is undertaken and finished. He arrives safely at his place of destination. There the little of romance which tinctured his imagination leaves him. His spirit sinks. He sighs for home, and moping out a monotonous existence, sinks into the grave under the paralyzing influence of spiritual weakness, in a cause in which he should have manifested a giant spirit, or else remained at home. Such, it is to be feared, is the character of too many of our modern missionaries. The papal missionary alluded to, Xavier, was distinguished for his learning, his eloquence and his other ac-

complishments, but fired with zeal to carry the gospel to distant lands, and overcoming all the obstacles thrown in his way by argument, ridicule, or lack of co-operation, he fearlessly threw himself into the first vessel that offered itself for India, depending for his existence upon the bounty of his fellow passengers for daily bread; and arriving on the shores of India, rushed into the thickest of its midnight moral darkness, with no other guide than his burning zeal, enkindling a flame of heaven's light wherever he went, conquering, or overcoming all difficulties, till at last he breathed his last breath, the spiritual conqueror of hundreds of thousands of degraded heathen, in India, China and Japan.

2. To the selfish, grasping, covetous character of religious profession in the present day, may be ascribed the painful lack of missionary effort amongst us. The haste to be rich, the desire to appear so, the love of the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life, all these are acting with a fearful influence in impeding the diffusion of christianity amongst the heathen. Money is required,—it cannot be spared from our lusts. Men are required by the thousands,—they will not come forward. The young and the vigorous, educating in our theological institutions for the ministry, are nearly in all cases preparing to fill parishes at home, while ministers of Christ, qualified from age and experience to fill such parishes, are driven from them and laid upon the shelf, as unfitted for an age of excitement and denominational ascendancy.

If Paul, while writing to the Philipians from Rome, lamented the existence of such a spirit of selfishness as was displayed around him there, "for all seek their own," said he, "not the things which are Jesus Christ's," I wonder what he would say, were he permitted to revisit earth, and pen a description of existing profession. I fear it would be an exceedingly dark and gloomy picture, and few or none could be found who could say to their Master, Christ, "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee."

3. Another cause of the present condition of the heathen world is the present system of superintending, and fiscal agency employed.

When christians about fifty years ago were at length to some extent, aroused to a sense of their duty to the heathen, the effort put forth by them, unfortunately took a wrong direction, by the

employment of the present fiscal agency, and general superintendence of an institution unknown to, and unauthorized by the New Testament; and that beaten track has been ever since that period followed with but little or no deviation from it, both in Europe and in America, notwithstanding its unscriptural character. It threw the collection of funds for missionary purposes upon the eleemosynary principle, and removed the responsibility of the management of missionary labor from the churches of Christ and placed it upon combinations unknown to the New Testament. In that pure code of duty and example, the churches are supposed to be capable of doing, if they will, the whole will of the Lord, without the aid of worldly and carnal policy, and I apprehend that excepting their compulsory character, civil establishments of religion might be pleaded for, in support of the kingdom of Christ, with as much propriety as the complicated machinery of corporate missionary societies, comprising Presidents, Vice Presidents, Boards of Management, Treasurers, Home, Foreign and Recording Secretaries, all bearing their blushing honors thick upon them, like the arch-bishops, bishops, deans and chapters of a civil establishment of christianity.

And yet some persons will affirm that this is all scriptural, and profess to see in the Baptist Triennial Convention, for instance, an organization quite apostolic; but for my own part, I have never been able to discover it. Some have supposed that the germ of the plan of the Triennial Convention may be found in the case of the contributions made by the gentile churches, and carried by delegation to the poor saints in Jerusalem. But there can be no parallel drawn betwixt them in favor of the Convention. These contributions were made for a specific and a temporary purpose, the relief of the poor, at a peculiar juncture, occasioned by a famine, and the money was carried by deputations to Jerusalem, that so the love of the respective churches who had contributed of their substance, might be more powerfully displayed, by this additional proof of self-denial. The truth is, the case now under consideration is not a case affording a precedent for the formation of organizations by delegations intended to supplant the peculiar work of the churches of Christ, but is simply one of *precedent and rule in the important matter of regulating the pecuniary contributions of*

*the churches*, and extends no farther than to these. The delegations accompanying the gift of money, were peculiar to the exigency of the case. The delegates employed, instead of taking the money to a convention, or board, or society, which should afterwards disburse it to applicants, carried it at once to the very spot where it was needed, where misery was felt, and relief demanded, and there they disbursed it.

Instead, then, of affording a precedent for such a complicated machine as the Baptist Triennial Convention, the pretensions of which extend to the preaching of the gospel to the heathen, the very case now cited in support of it, is entirely against it, as being a scriptural institution. In the case of the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem, the money was carried by the delegates to the objects of their bounty, and in doing so, no church duty was abandoned, or delegated to them; but churches, attaching themselves to the Baptist Triennial Convention, separate themselves entirely from missionary work, their proper and imperative duty, save in the matter of the pecuniary support of the convention, while the few churches who are qualified by the rules of the convention, (and they are but few comparatively,) to send delegates to sit as members in the convention, send them upon the aristocratic principle of *representing money*, namely, a subscription of three years continuance, of one hundred dollars annually; and when they are there, they have nothing more to do with missionary direction, than mere automata, made to be played upon by the wire-drawers who conduct the movements of the body. It is true, a few of the most influential delegates may have resolutions put into their hands, to be moved for the adoption of the convention, and it is but fitting and proper that they should have something to do, after a long and expensive journey to meet the convention; while it must be a source of great satisfaction to be so employed, but alas! such resolutions contribute little towards the evangelizing of the heathen. It would be doubtless an advantage and might be rendered a profitable subject of inquiry, to bring to the light the multitude of good resolutions which have been moved, and seconded, and adopted by missionary Boards and Conventions, with their corresponding fulfilment; such, for example, as the famous Richmond resolution of the Baptist Tri-

ennial Convention of 1835, which resolved to raise $100,000 for the service of that year, besides instructing the board of management "to establish new missions in every unoccupied place, where there may be a reasonable prospect of success, and to employ in some part of the great field, every properly qualified missionary, whose services the Board may be able to obtain."

By instituting such an inquiry as I have now proposed, the folly and wickedness of such a procedure of solemn trifling with the everlasting interests of the heathen would be shown, and its utter, and entire destitution of the simplicity which is in Christ, made truly manifest. The Spanish proverb says, and says truly, "that the road to hell is paved with good intentions." I am confident that other roads are no less so, and among them may be found the beaten track of modern missionary organizations, not only paved with good intentions, but absolutely encumbering and impeding the traveller who may be truly concerned for the welfare of the perishing heathen.

And I would here inquire, can such an aristocratic state of things belong to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, such as I have pointed out, and which modern missionary organizations exhibit? It is impossible. The evangelizing of the world is the duty of the churches of Christ, and cannot be delegated by them to any other body, no matter what may be the object of its organization, or the rank, the reputation, or the influence of its membership. It is the duty of *churches*, in which all are brethren, and not the duty of the church catholic (which, if it has an existence has no tangible visibility, for any purpose of utility,) to work out the commission of Christ, which requires the evangelizing of the world, and not to commute this duty, by simply advancing money to Conventions, Missionary Boards, or Missionary Societies, all of which, with their high sounding pretensions as *wholesale* missionary agents, swallow up and engross the spirit of missionary enterprize, and render its display, or its production, almost impossible among the membership of churches.

If, then, this be the true character of the missionary enterprize of the last fifty years, it ought not to be matter of astonishment that so little has been done for the heathen, and that the people of God, almost in despair, fold their hands, in utter astonishment,

when they contemplate the picture, and say, "and at this rate, when shall the world be evangelized, and brought to Christ? When shall he have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession?"

Why, the system is deficient in love to Christ, and to the souls of men, and God cannot honor it, as he did the exertions of those who were impelled in all they did and suffered for the diffusion of the gospel, by the constraining love of Christ. Money, money is the object of such organizations, and this, if it be obtained, no matter what may be the principle which actuates the donors. The continual cry is money, give us money, and we shall evangelize the heathen; appealing to some of the worst passions of our fallen nature, to vanity, and to the pride of distinction, that so they may obtain supplies of money, without regard to the only motive of all acceptable obedience in the sight of God, the love of the Saviour. This is strong language, but let the Baptist Board for Foreign Missions speak for itself. In the Report submitted to the Triennial Convention in 1841, it says, "the expediency of providing for the appointment to honorary memberships in the Board, annual, and for life, is also submitted respectfully to the consideration of the convention. The pecuniary condition of membership in the convention, is the annual payment of $100. A similar payment, or rather the same might be allowed to constitute, also, an honorary membership of the Board, for the year or years in which it was made, and the payment of $ at any one time, to constitute an honorary life membership. A provision to this end, would have a direct favorable bearing upon the collection of mission funds, and at the same time, promote a feeling of common interest, and of the duty of hearty co-operation in some, who having no personal agency in the doings of the committee or of the Board, are liable to regard them as matters of foreign concernment."

And can such a recommendation be in accordance with the spirit of Christ, and his holy religion? No. It needs to fall under the exhortation of our blessed and humble Master to his disciples, "except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." He read this lesson to aspirants after greatness and distinction in the kingdom of heaven, (see Matthew xviii., 1-4,) and I would particularly recom-

mend its careful study to all missionary financiers, with whom the end sanctifies the means, so long as the present system of missionary organizations continues.

But even as a system adapted to raise the greatest amount of pecuniary support, the present organizations are greatly deficient, notwithstanding the utmost ingenuity has been resorted to by devising plans to ensure it, and the most vigorous efforts employed to give these plans efficiency. And yet all fail. All these societies are in debt, expending more than their receipts, and telling the public so, in order that it may take compassion upon them, for doing that for which they would be justly censured in private life. Not a cent a month is collected for the missionary enterprize from the communicants of the Baptist denomination in the United States, and I suppose the working of the system is equally bad throughout the other evangelical denominations, employed in the missionary enterprize. Though the Baptist denomination in the United States be perhaps apparently the lowest in the scale of contribution, when the number of its communicants are taken into the account, the wealth of the other denominations, although perhaps increasing the amount of their contributions, does not, in fact, attest their liberality, as exceeding that of their Baptist brethren. The Baptists in England are often appealed to as contributing far more in proportion to their numbers than their brethren on this side of the Atlantic; but this is occasioned by the large contributions they receive from members of other denominations, whose benevolence cannot be confined by sectarian limits. In this country this is rarely the case, every denomination being left to its own resources.

No small portion of the evils attaching to the present system is occasioned by the continual artificial excitement which is resorted to for the purpose of enlarging the contributions for missionary purposes. An extraordinary effort for prayer, for the spread of the gospel, means, too often, an extraordinary effort to raise money, instead of seeking the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon evangelizing effort; and thus the pure, the holy, and the benevolent spirit which ought to characterize the communication of the gospel to the perishing heathen, evaporates, and is lost, by coming in contact with pretensions, so easily seen to be wholly secular, instead of pure, and benevolent, and holy.

Another evil connected with the present system of missionary organizations is the absence of *responsibility* as it respects pecuniary contributions, the neglect of which it cannot reach. A man may give, or he may not give, just as it pleases him, without incurring any degree of inconvenient censure; but were missionary effort combined, as it ought to be, with the action of the church of which he was a member, he could not shrink from the responsibility of its support, according to his means, without incurring the loss of the confidence of his brethren in his religious character. And why should it not be so? The man who would neglect to contribute to the support of the ministry of the gospel at home, in the church of which he was a member, would be justly excluded from its fellowship for his covetousness. If then, the propagation of the gospel *abroad* be equally his duty, the neglect of its support should be in all cases visited with the same penalty. The one must be done, and the other not left undone ; and it is high time that the obligations of christians to evangelize the world, as well as their own immediate neighborhoods, were thus pressed upon their attention, and an opportunity afforded them for its display, which by the present missionary organizations is altogether impracticable. Supposing that modern missionary organizations were proper, it is utterly disgraceful to professed christianity, and ought not to be tolerated, that such organizations tell us that they cannot attend to the urgent appeals made by the circumstances of the heathen, where doors of usefulness are opened, for lack of pecuniary means, while abundance of money, and to spare it is admitted, is in the possession of professors of religion, who are members of christian churches, more than sufficient for the purpose. Surely in such a case as this, the guilt and misery of the heathen must lie at the door of such, and their blood be required at their hands who thus refuse to them the means of safety. Here then is a fearful responsibility, but who can enforce the penalty of its neglect? The man who thus treats the claims of the heathen, and the commission of his Saviour, should be written *Christless;* but who is to do it ? A Missionary Board cannot. But a church of Christ could and ought to do it, and would do it, were the duty of evangelizing the heathen or the world around it considered to be as much its duty as the maintenance of the gospel at home. To the present

system then, may be fairly attributable a large amount of the covetousness of religious profession, for responsibility in pecuniary contribution is a mere shadow under the present eleemosynary system of contribution for missionary enterprize. It may appeal, as it continually does, to the conscience, but there can be no action to back this appeal. The independence of the churches forbids such an exercise of authority on the part of missionary corporations, and hence responsibility as to the pecuniary support of missions is almost unknown, requiring its inculcation in a connection other than such organizations afford, where it could be enforced and displayed.

After having pointed out what I consider as limiting and impeding missionary enterprize, and narrowing the field of success, I now proceed to point out a remedy, such as would ensure a far more extensive system of effort, bring into action the superintendence of a more effective agency, and the production of such pecuniary support as would leave the energies of this agency free and unfettered in pursuing the great object of evangelization. All this I believe, and more, might be effected by the adoption of the following plan, which I submit with all due deference to the prayerful consideration of the friends of missions generally, and to the Baptist denomination in particular, whether in the United States, or in Great Britain, inasmuch as they were the first to adopt the present defective system, employed to work out the Great Commission, they may be the first to abandon it for one more in accordance with primitive example, the humble and the devoted spirit and temper of christianity, and the true and proper independence of the churches of Jesus Christ.

The plan which I propose for the adoption of the churches is the following.

1. That churches consider themselves in the scriptural light of independent missionary bodies, and bound to discharge all the functions peculiar to this character, in accordance with the commission to preach the gospel to all nations, as recorded by the evangelist Matthew, xxviii. 19—20.

2. That in accordance with this view of the missionary character of the churches, it be considered imperative upon them to provide missionaries either from among their own membership,

or from the membership of sister churches, men educated for the purpose, and otherwise qualified for the missionary character. That these be sent forth under the sole direction of the church of which they already are or may become members, to that field of labor to which they may be appointed by the advice of their brethren.

3. That where one church cannot support *two* such missionaries, then let it support *one*, and uniting with another church similarly circumstanced, let them thus united send these two missionaries to labor in one locality, (that the example of Christ may be closely followed in this important particular,) under their joint superintendence and direction, each missionary corresponding directly with the church to which he belonged, in reporting his labor as the missionary of that church.

4. That the necessary funds for the support of the missionaries of the churches, be obtained on the same principle as the salaries of the pastors of the particular churches, that is, on one common principle of pecuniary contribution as enjoined by the apostle, in his 1st epistle to the Corinthians, xvi. 2, "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him," viewing this injunction as not only exhibiting a system as to the mode and time of giving, but also a system shewing the amount of individual contributions expected under its operation.

1. The mode of contribution here enjoined, appears in a certain sum of money being laid aside for the specific purpose of being paid on a stated occasion.

2. It was to be contributed on the Lord's day, when they came together for public worship.

3. The *amount of contribution was systematic*, in accordance with an understood rule, and not a capricious or a vague and undefined sum of money which was contributed.

That the tithe or tenth of income was the rule or standard of contribution, is extremely probable.

1. Because from the earliest period, it was the standard of contribution for the worship of God, and not peculiar to the *Jewish* dispensation. It was paid by Abraham to Melchizedek, the king of Salem, the priest of the most high God, and undoubtedly as a tribute for the support of public worship. When Jacob was

brought to a sense of the enjoyment of the Divine favor by the vision at Bethel, he vowed that when he returned from the distant country to which he was then travelling, he should designate the tenth of his income to the service of Jehovah.

In these two illustrious cases, we see what was then considered to be the standard of pecuniary contribution for the service of God; and when we reflect that during the patriarchal dispensation no expensive or typical establishment of religion existed, these examples are to be viewed as exhibiting public opinion or the prevailing sentiment on the subject of the support of religion, while to succeeding generations, they ought to be understood as an example of moral obligation to the same import, exhibiting a standard by which all could contribute equally in the sight of God, although not to the same pecuniary amount, owing to the diversity of men's incomes.

In the time of our Lord, this equable mode of contribution was neglected to some extent; consequently we see one poor widow contributing in a most disproportionate degree to the service of God, while the rich, though casting into the treasury larger gifts out of their abundance, yet did not do so, after all, to the extent and in accordance with conscientious duty. To bring the churches of Christ to a better state of consecrated conscientious action in pecuniary contribution, seems to me to be the intention of the apostolic rule already referred to.

2. The application of the apostolic rule required some understood standard, such as the tithe to fix the amount of contribution, inasmuch as men's minds would have been otherwise variously inclined according to their natural dispositions with regard to its amount, and doubtless that of the tithe being the well known amount of contribution was the standard by which their contributions were guided in accordance with the state of their worldly circumstances.

Unless this view of the subject be admitted, we can see no way by which any thing like equality in giving according to their circumstances could have been displayed. Under any other system one man would have supposed, for example, one dollar to be amply sufficient as corresponding with his prosperity, while another man with far less means, but possessing a far more devoted and generous soul, would have deemed three dollars his proportion. With

an understood standard, and its conscientious application, this inequality was rendered impossible.

An assessment upon *property* to meet the support of the gospel and its propagation either at home or abroad, would not be in accordance with the scriptural principle of contribution now stated. In fact it would be at variance with it. That the principle embraces *income*, from whatever source it is derived, and not property, is obvious from the very circumstance of the contributions being required on the first day of every week; while the very hebdomadal character of the contributions indicates uncertainty in the source from whence the collection was to be drawn, a character which could not apply to hoarded treasures.

But an assessment upon property, it would be easy to show, would be oppressive and unjust, whereas if laid upon income, it would be equitable and easy. For instance, a person may derive his means of support from money we shall suppose loaned on interest, or vested in a farm, and rented by another. The capital sum may be $4000, producing an income of $240 per annum. Another individual has only $1000 of capital, but this he has vested in trade or in business, and he derives from it an income of $600. Now if the support of religion was to be derived from an assessment upon property, would there not be an act of manifest injustice in assessing the one at $4000, and the other only at $1000, when the difference of income or prosperity are so disproportionate, making the man with more property but less income, pay four times more than the other. Surely this would not be in accordance with the divine injunction, "as the Lord had prospered them."

The principle of the tithe applied to income, I recommend then as essential to the working out of the plan I propose. Upon no other principle, so far as pecuniary means are concerned, can the evangelizing of the world be accomplished. It accords with the injunction of Jesus Christ, "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you," demanding our first attention to the cause of religion, in its propagation, leaving to His providence every other consideration, whether personal or relative. This injunction, and the promise appended to it, in no wise differed from that which as a general thing

was pressed upon the attention of the fearers of God under the old dispensation. "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst with new wine."

But although a tenth or tithe of income be obviously the most moderate amount of voluntary obligation, in contributing to the cause of God, if it can be shown that a *less amount* will suffice for evangelizing purposes, and the support of the ministry at home, let a smaller amount of contribution be fixed for the time and adhered to. I care not what this amount may be; let it be even a twentieth part of income instead of a tenth, only let it be uniform in its application to the members of individual churches, that so there may be conscientious equality in contributing to the cause of God, on the part of every one, as the Lord hath prospered him. All I plead for is the adoption of the general scriptural rule, which will apply to all the members of a church, thus obviating one of the most repulsive features of the present system, that of permitting the covetous, or those who expend nearly the whole of their earnings or income upon the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, or the pride of life, from contributing according to their earnings or income, leaving the support of the gospel, in a great degree, to be borne by the truly conscientious and devoted amongst their brethren.

To apply the general rule now recommended, all that is necessary is, that every church should adopt a scale of contribution which should meet the general circumstances of its members, and to cover by its adoption every thing demanded from them as a body, in the shape of pecuniary effort. This scale to be applicable only to weekly payments, in accordance with apostolic rule, and to comprehend payments of 5, 10, 20, 25, 50, 75, 100, 125, 150, and 200 cents per week, and which scale would certainly embrace the circumstances and condition nearly of all its members, "as God had prospered them." The members of the church conscientiously ranging themselves according to this scale of contribution, and making the corresponding payment every Lord's day to the collecting deacon of the church, or to persons appointed for the purpose. But it must be considered indispensable never to postpone its payment except in the case of unavoidable absence,

the excellence of the scriptural principle, arising from the regularity of the contribution, and the consequent avoidance of the pressure of a comparatively large sum at one time, a matter of no little importance to persons with limited incomes, and of which description the churches of Christ must be always composed.

Christianity, be it observed, is a religion intended to meet the circumstances of such. "To the poor the gospel is preached," and while it does not exclude the rich, it says, "how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." The sacred rites and simple institutions of Jesus Christ are all nicely adjusted with a due regard to the circumstances of comparative poverty, in which his disciples as bodies were to be found; and to this very circumstance is to be attributed the institution of weekly pecuniary contribution, as best adapted to their circumstances. The present mode of contribution towards the support and propagation of religion is more adapted to meet the circumstances of persons in a prosperous condition, as to temporal things, than the circumstances of those whose incomes are narrow, and perhaps uncertain. But by the scriptural plan as enjoined by the apostle, both classes can meet in perfect harmony and equality upon one common principle in contributing to the support of the kingdom of God, and the spread of His gospel, the poor rejoicing in that he is exalted, and the rich in that he is made low.

It ought, then, to be no small recommendation of the scriptural principle of pecuniary contribution, now proposed for the adoption of churches for the propagation of the gospel among the heathen, and for its support at home, that it enables *all* to be *contributors* by the payment of small sums weekly, easing none who should not be eased, nor burdening those who should not be burdened.

Another recommendation of the plan proposed is, that the payments being made in detail, they are comparatively unfelt, and the wisdom of God is seen in the appointment, when it is considered in this light. The fact is, by disbursements in themselves small, the great expenditures of mankind are commonly made, and large results realized from this mode of operation. The immense sums, for instance, expended by the use of that filthy and detestable weed, tobacco, never would be expended were its purchases made by its consumers every quarter, but being purchased from

hand to mouth, the gratification of this vile lust commands an expenditure which it never could command upon any other principle.*

Enough has been said, I would fain hope, in commendation of the principle, by the operation of which, adequate funds would be obtained for every purpose in accordance with the working out of the great commission, both at home and abroad.

To show the practical working of the principle proposed to guide the contributions of the churches, I will suppose a church of 160 members to adopt it, and under its operation to raise the funds requisite for every purpose required by the church. I suppose it will hardly be necessary for me to explain that the proposed mode of contribution does not simply apply to weekly incomes, but only to *weekly contributions*, in accordance with the current general circumstances of individuals. These may be furnished by weekly, monthly, or annual incomes, or averaged estimates of income from trades, just as the providence of God may have disposed the circumstances of individuals. The members I shall suppose would contribute according to the following scale, at the rate of one twentieth part of their income.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | members | without | income | or | wages, | | | | | - | | $000 |
| 25 | " | earning | $1 | per | week, | 1-20th, | or | 5 | cts | per | week, | 65 |
| 50 | " | " | 2 | " | " | " | " | 10 | " | " | " | 260 |
| 20 | " | " | 4 | " | " | " | " | 20 | " | " | " | 208 |
| 50 | " | " | 5 | " | " | " | " | 25 | " | " | " | 650 |
| 5 | " | " | 10 | " | " | " | " | 50 | " | " | " | 130 |
| 160 | members, | 52 | weeks, | 1-20th | of | income, | | | | - | | $1,313 |

* It will scarcely be credited, but yet it is no less true, that in one year duty has been paid to the government of Great Britain upon 18,504,510 lbs. of unmanufactured tobacco, entered for home consumption, amounting to the enormous sum of £2,775,676 10*s.* sterling, and which, before it reached the consumer, had to be charged with the importer's price and profit as well as that of the manufacturer's and retailer's, making together a cost of little short of twenty millions of dollars, paid by the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland for this article of *luxury*, and in the manner above referred to.

The consumption of tobacco in the United States, I suppose, exceeds that of Great Britain, although the population is but one half that of the latter, but let us take it at the same amount and as costing the American consumer only one third what it costs the British consumer, and we have the enormous amount of nearly *seven millions of dollars* expended upon this vile narcotic weed by all classes of the community, including professors of religion and ministers of the gospel, who can have no better plea for its use than could be made and sustained for opium and brandy. Talk of temperance and righteousness, while expending seven millions of dollars on tobacco and not half a million on the missionary enterprize!!!

To accomplish the above collection in as short a period as possible, let fifteen collectors be appointed, each having charge of the collection to be taken from ten contributors. Let them be furnished with books containing 52 tables, having on the left pages blank lines for the names of the ten members, and on the right hand page columns headed with the various items of contribution, 5, 10, 20, 25, 50, 75, 100, 125, 150, 200 cents. When a payment is made let it be immediately filled into the proper column corresponding with the name, and when all was collected, which would be the work of but a few moments, (the parties handing their contributions in small packets of paper, on which their names should be written,) let the whole sum be paid to the collecting deacon or treasurer, whose signature to the same would be a voucher for the collector's faithful discharge of his duty and a check upon the deacon or treasurer.

In the supposed case of the church of 160 members, I have not included any payments above fifty cents per week, and have supposed the rate of assessment at only one-twentieth part of income; but if the scriptural principle of a tenth had been supposed, the amount would have been exactly double, $2,626. And who can say that upon this principle this sum could not be easily raised from the poorest of our orthodox churches. Why, the payment of ten cents from an individual only earning $1 per week, a female help, I shall suppose, and leaving ninety cents for her own purposes, putting it into a bag without holes, and enjoying the blessing of God, who would say that the ninety cents would not procure to her all needful necessaries, and that no real comfort would be abridged by being confined to its expenditure. The same remark would hold equally good, nay, much more so, when applied to larger incomes.

The application of the principle I have now recommended, is destined, if adopted, to produce the most wonderful results in favor of religion. Then would the stated ministry at home be adequately supported, the destitute portions of our own country supplied, the foreign field overspread and occupied, the Bible largely distributed, education promoted, and many running to and fro, the knowledge of the Lord would be increased with a rapidity and to an extent such as prophecy in its glowing descriptions warrants us to anticipate, but which from the present eleemosynary principle in general use, never can be realized.

That this is no exaggerated picture, let it be considered that at the very moderate rate of supposed contribution for religious purposes, of one-twentieth of income in the church of 160 members, the Boston Baptist Association, which is composed of 38 churches containing 8734 members, would yield a sum not less than $71,673 for the worship of God, and the propagation of the gospel. But who does not know, who knows anything at all of the wealth in these churches, that this sum would be more than quadrupled were the equitable mode of contribution adopted, such as I have proposed, although but to the extent of one-twentieth of income, and a sum far greater than is contributed by all the Baptist churches in the United States, to the Baptist Board for Foreign Missions for the missionary enterprize, be obtained from this Association alone. Even at the rate assumed in the supposed case, where the highest rate of contribution is only $26 per annum from an income of $520, after defraying the salaries of the pastors of the various churches, there would remain for evangelizing purposes nearly $40,000. If, however, a voluntary assessment of a tenth were adopted even upon the very low scale of individual income, supposed not exceeding $520 per annum, there would remain after defraying the salaries of the pastors of the thirty-eight churches of the Association, more than $100,000 for evangelizing purposes. Such would be the power of the application of the scripture principle now recommended for adoption, even supposing the income of the members were to be estimated at this very low rate, and which has been purposely done to meet the fact of the great number of female members of our churches with very limited incomes. In the supposed case, however, more than half of the church is supposed not to earn more than $2 per week, i. e. 10 nothing, 25 members $1, and 50 members $2 per week, thus embracing 85 out of the 160 members.

In the case of the Boston Baptist Association, I have not alluded to the building of places of worship and the consequent charges of interest on money borrowed for their erection. By the proposed scriptural plan of contribution, I have no doubt but this would in all cases be adequately met, taking rent of pews only from persons who are not members of the churches, and who would not, it is probable, occupy places statedly unless they were

permitted to pay for them. But supposing it was deemed proper to take rent for pew accommodation from members as well as others, I could see no objection against it, inasmuch as it would be only paying for a temporal accommodation, and which for the time was held as their property. In all cases, however, the rent exacted should be so low as to cover at the utmost the interest only of the money expended upon the erection of the place of worship, and thus no hindrance but rather an encouragement would be afforded to attendance upon public worship.

Let us suppose a case. A place of worship has been erected at an expense of $40,000, affording pew accommodation for 900 sittings. The interest of this sum, supposing it were all borrowed at 6 per cent, would be $2,400. Of the 900 sittings I shall suppose 600 were occupied. Let these be rented at the rate of $4 each, or one dollar per quarter, and we have at once the required sum,—a rate so moderate that it could not interfere with the amount of stated and regular attendance upon public worship, but would rather encourage and promote it. There would besides be equity in this mode of proceeding, because a man would not be taxed for the support of religion when it had no hold of his affections, but only for that which he actually enjoyed, his pew accommodation. It is a great absurdity, if it be not positively sinful, to tax an ungodly man for the worship of God who has no heart to it, while it is evident that by the present system, there is a tendency to drive such men away from our public assemblies whose attendance ought rather to be encouraged, by our demanding nothing more from them than a reasonable compensation for their comfortable accommodation in the pews they occupy.*

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* The debt of the nine Baptist churches in the city of Boston, amounts to $62,769. Of this sum, no less than two-thirds of the annual charge of interest is provided for by the rents received from stores, school-rooms, &c., under the places of worship, and rented by occupants. The number of communicants in the nine churches, is 4023. Now apply the supposed case of one twentieth of income as the scale of contribution by these members of the nine churches, and low as is the supposed amount of income they enjoy, we shall have a product of no less than $33,012

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| From this deduct the salaries of the pastors of the churches, | $13,600 | |
| Interest of money borrowed on the erection of the places of worship, $22,269, and to be provided for, | 1,336 | |
| | | 14,936 |
| Leaving | | $18,076 |

for evangelizing purposes, and which would enable these nine churches to sustain no less than thirty missionaries, while if a tenth of income was applied as the scale of contribu-

5. That if the plan now submitted should meet with the general concurrence of the various evangelical denominations, the missionaries employed at present by the various boards of foreign missions be requested to become the missionaries of the particular churches, adopting the plan, and upon their becoming so, their connection to cease and determine with the boards. In this way, in no short time would such organizations be speedily released from all responsibility, and their labors cease being merged in the action of the churches at large.

6. As a necessary consequence of the adoption of the plan now proposed, more prominence would be given to the diffusion of the gospel, both at home and abroad, by the individual action of the churches; it would therefore be necessary to form associations of ten to fifteen churches in each, who by taking cognizance of missionary enterprize, and exhibiting its interesting details as communicated by the missionaries of the respective churches of these associations would thereby excite a more general interest in the propagation of the gospel, than exists at present, besides contributing to the permanence of this interest. Such associations of churches to meet quarterly, and a digest of the missionary information communicated, to be afterwards published either in some of the religious periodicals of the day, or published by the associations themselves, for general circulation amongst the members of the churches. These associations could combine, with what is now proposed, all that is done at present by the association of churches, particularly in the Baptist denomination, (which is chiefly statistical,) and further, they would undoubtedly prove, wherever

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tion, this number could be doubled, besides permitting the expenditure of more than $15,000 upon other benevolent objects, such as the support of the Bible cause, and our theological educational institutions.

And who dare say that all this could not be done by these churches, and easily done, and ought not to be attempted. I have confidence in their love and attachment to the Saviour and to His cause. From what I know of these churches, I have estimated their pecuniary ability far too low, and I must, therefore, say to them, "*forgive me this wrong.*" But low as is the supposed case of their ability to contribute, what a noble example would be presented to the world were *this view of ability acted upon*, and thirty missionaries sent forth from the Baptist churches in the city of Boston, to labor in that interesting field now opened up in the immense empire of China for the propagation of the gospel, besides employing thirty more in what is denominated the Home field—the destitute portions of our own country. Some may say, where are the men? I reply, they are in the churches. They can provide both the men and the means if duty be apprehended as it is now pressed upon their attention.

they were held, truly beneficial to the interests of religion, combined as they would be with the religious exercises adopted and proper for such occasions.

This is a brief outline of the plan which I propose to work out the Great Commission of preaching the gospel to the heathen, and to the destitute portions of our own country, namely, by individual churches becoming what Jesus Christ has intended they should be, truly missionary in their character, and as a necessary result of this character, engaging directly and personally in the work by the support of missionaries either in the home or in the foreign field, such persons laboring under their sole direction, without the aid of a missionary Board, and all this based upon a holy consecration of property to the service of God on the part of the members of these churches, according to their circumstances.

The following advantages would be more than realized by its adoption.

1. It would present missionary enterprize in a more scriptural light to the world, and it would be more authoritative, because more in accordance with the will of Christ, than the present missionary organizations of legally incorporated bodies, to whom the Great Commission cannot by any possibility apply. Its execution is enjoined upon churches, and its most encouraging promise, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," is addressed to churches engaged in working it out; while at present, by the existing missionary organizations of Boards, &c., the pastors, deacons and members of churches are turned into mere collectors of cents and dollars, without ever once coming into direct and personal contact with missionary direction, unless they are aristocratic enough to represent a sum of money, which in the case of the Baptist General Convention for Foreign Missions must be not less than $300 contributed in sums of $100 annually for three years, or some similar or honorary qualifications, presenting a system of exclusiveness and usurpation, although avowedly made in the service of God, yet utterly repugnant to the institutions of Jesus Christ.

2. Another advantage resulting from the proposed plan would be, that if adopted, the heavy expense attending the direction of missionary enterprize by the present system would be saved, and

every cent contributed for the purpose of evangelizing the heathen would in that case be appropriated to its legitimate purpose. I do not mean, however, to be understood as insinuating that the charges attending the present management of missionary corporations are extravagant; far from it. Such an expenditure, heavy as it is, is unavoidable by the present system, but it is a humbling consideration, that from the receipts of the Baptist Board for Foreign Missions for instance, for the year ending 16th April, 1841, amounting to $50,924,44, no less a sum than $9886,59 was necessarily expended in the expense of management and collection, being a charge of more than nineteen per cent, or about one fifth part of the whole, while the expense of the last year's management and collection, ending 1st April 1842, amounted to $9015,14, and the receipts up to the same period not including legacies and dividends on bank stock and loans was only $46,053,83, shewing the permanence of the amount of the charge for management and collection to be nearly one fifth of the entire revenue derived from the contributions of the Baptist churches in the United States.

Now this whole sum is totally lost, as far as it regards the great object for which it was collected, for of every $100 collected by a church, $19 of it or more is expended by the management of the Board in Boston or its agents; and it is surely high time that the churches, by doing their own missionary work, should not only increase their means of promoting the work of God, but prevent this unnecessary expenditure of money by the adoption of the plan I have proposed, or some other, combining the same scriptural and rational principles which it embraces.

But a very large sum of money is expended by ministers and others in travelling to distant parts of the United States as delegates to conventions and annual meetings of a similar character, which should be saved, and which, although the present system deems essential for its support, is rendered burdensome to individuals; while such meetings afford no scope for business of any importance as pertaining to the great and professed object for which they are convened, being limited more to that which is purely honorary or necessary to sanction the official action of their officers.

The great expenditure attending such convocations may be best

understood, when I state that at the tenth Triennial Meeting of the Baptist General Convention held in Baltimore in 1841, no less than 261 members were present, whose travelling expenses, averaging them at $20, (which is certainly a very low average,) must have exceeded the sum of $5220!! I ask, is such an expenditure justifiable, and should it be permitted when it is ostensibly made in behalf of the cause of missions, and yet has no possible influence of a salutary description, unless solemn trifling with the interests of the perishing heathen is to be considered as salutary and useful. For what, after all, do such conventions produce? Perhaps a few good resolutions moved seconded and adopted, the performance of which is always doubtful, and as I have already shown, sometimes impracticable. No doubt they elect a board of managers, but in general these managers have nothing more to do in missionary direction than the slips they occupy for the time being in the place of meeting where they are convened, while this idle position, this *otium cum dignitate*, is coveted and sought after; and on the last occasion of the meeting of the Triennial Convention at Baltimore, was made the arena of the alleged influence of pro-slavery men over the *real directors and managers* of the convention in the disposal of this dignity. And are such doings worthy of men whose minds are enlightened as to the claims of the perishing heathen? Solemn trifling and idle words at an expense of some $5000, which would have sufficed to have employed several missionaries for years, preaching the love of God in the gift of His Son, in the promising field of missionary labor now opened up in China, but which cannot be occupied, it seems, for want of funds—$5000 expended for the benefit of rail road and steam boat corporations, to bring together men, not as the representatives of the piety and the wisdom of the churches of Christ, but actually as the representatives of their wealth; and this ostensibly for the benefit of the perishing heathen!!!

3. Another advantage resulting from the proposed plan, if adopted, would arise from the circumstance of the funds employed in missionary enterprize being all derived from sources satisfactory to the parties, under whose superintendence they would be expended, and the independence of the churches secured, both in the north and in the south upon the subject of slavery, in connection with the propagation of the gospel among the heathen.

4. The plan proposed, if adopted, will introduce and promote a system of liberality towards the support of missionary effort and every other benevolent enterprize, now so lamentably deficient.

The complaint has become universal respecting the absence of liberality in pecuniary contributions, from all the orthodox missionary organizations in the land. But I do not blame the churches so much for withholding it, as the system which is so clamorous to obtain contributions, because the responsibility of the churches has never been urged upon them in a tangible shape. It has always come before them in a vague and undefined form; but the plan submitted for the adoption of the churches, brings responsibility to every christian's door, under a system from which none can or ought to be exempted, and men's professions of religion would be, to some extent at least, tried by their works under its operation. For lack of a system of responsibility, the commission of Christ which enjoins the evangelization of the world, has been fed like Lazarus by the crumbs which fell from our tables, and men have been permitted to rob God in tithes and offerings without any feeling of compunction or remorse, as if it were no crime to indulge in covetous desires and ambitious projects, while the word of God sounds in their ears, that no covetous man who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

With a system of weekly contributions, such as I have recommended from the word of God, such a state of things could not exist as is at present displayed by all denominations with regard to pecuniary effort. At the late missionary conference of the Baptist denomination, held in Worcester, Mass., one member declared that the church of which he was the pastor, could do with ease for the missionary enterprize all that was contributed by the Baptist churches in the United States for the same purpose. Startling as is such an announcement with God's declared hatred of covetousness, and its total inconsistency with the christian character, yet I believe there are many such churches, not only in the Baptist denomination, but in every other denomination in the land who are in the possession of wealth, but will part with no more than is barely sufficient to maintain the decencies of public worship, and even this in so limited a degree that the ministry of such churches is held on a pinching tenure, approaching to, if not abso-

lute poverty, while the cause of God in the regions beyond them must be supported by contributions, which is to them of no comparative importance, and go a begging elsewhere to receive a similar stinted measure of countenance, that so it may not absolutely perish. We want then a system, and such a system as will insure the action of responsibility in contributing of our pecuniary means for every department of the service of God. Such a system the word of God has unfolded. It possesses the attribute of being purely voluntary and not compulsory, leaving to every individual to fix the weekly amount of his contributions, in accordance with his general circumstances, while it at the same time enables his brethren to judge of his sincerity and conscientiousness in doing so.

5. Another advantage resulting from the plan I have proposed would be, that the missionary enterprize would not be presented in its present imposing *sectarian attitude*, either at home or abroad. For example, individual missionaries would be found prosecuting their labours and advocating their peculiar views of the ordinances of Jesus Christ, not as the representatives of the Baptist denomination of England or of America, but of individual churches. Truth would not be presented so strongly denominational as is now done by Baptists and Pedo Baptists. Individual effort would be displayed to the perishing heathen on the part of the missionary, not as the action of a unit of a large and powerful denomination, but as that of a unit of an independent body of Christians, a church of Jesus Christ.

With regard to the influence of the proposed plan upon party spirit at home, there would be a corresponding advantage gained, as by its adoption there would be, to some extent, at least a lessening of sectarian influence, so far as the diminution of denominational masses is concerned in missionary organizations. Such masses, controlled as they often are by the elite of the various denominations, have naturally this tendency, keeping sects apart from each other, producing exclusiveness, fortifying prejudice and strengthening those platforms of doctrine or order, which operate so disastrously to the cause of truth by impeding investigation.

6. Another advantage resulting from the proposed plan would be, the sympathy produced by it in behalf of the missionary. At present this exists nowhere but in the imagination of those who

know no better. It may be felt officially by the Board under whom he serves, but it ought to be felt as for the ministry at home, and even to a far greater degree by personal considerations, such as the plan proposed would serve to elicit. For instance, the correspondence being mutual, and direct, and regular, would insure a sympathy which cannot exist under the present system. The journal of a missionary in such a connection would be read with an interest which is nowhere displayed by the perusal of such a document in the pages of a magazine. *Our missionary* would sound somewhat like *our minister* in the ears of an affectionate, a deeply devoted and pious people. They would then have an object to pray for in the success of his labors, and a solicitude to feel for his personal comfort, which is unknown by the existing plan of operations; while this very sympathy would operate in producing a missionary spirit it is probable, in the breasts of many among them, who would seek to share in person with him his toils, his privations, and his triumphs in the propagation of the gospel. And this is just what is wanted. Missionaries ought to be augmented ten thousand fold. By the present system this is impossible, while the plan laid down by me is evidently calculated to do so.

Such are a few of the obvious advantages which would result from the adoption of the plan proposed, to give energy and power to missionary enterprize. I have now to notice some anticipated objections to the proposed plan.

1. Missionaries would not be inclined to exercise that confidence in churches which they now repose in missionary societies or boards for their support. This objection supposes that men will be governed by sordid pecuniary considerations in this matter, and that the spirit which is enkindled in the bosom of the missionary, of love to Christ and to the perishing souls of the heathen, would be quenched for lack of confidence in the church for his support, which designates him and sends him forth to his field of missionary labor. I have shown that by the proposed plan of systematic responsibility with regard to pecuniary contributions operating in churches, there would be always abundance and to spare for the support of every good work, and therefore no missionary under its operation could miss an adequate and due support, which

he hardly enjoys by the present eleemosynary system of contribution to missionary boards. My plan is to remove him from a dependence upon a society supported by a miserable system of mendicity, to one of simple dependence upon the church of which he is a member, and for which he is a missionary of the cross of Jesus Christ, and who of their abundance shall minister to his necessities upon the same principle upon which they support their minister at home.

2. Another objection may be anticipated and answered, as arising from the difficulty of possessing in our churches suitable persons for conducting the necessary correspondence with the missionaries employed. But surely between pastors, church clerks and deacons, so very simple a matter as this cannot be seriously urged as an objection. There is no mystery in such matters, at least there should be none.

3. Another objection may be stated and obviated, and that is, the difficulty of remitting monies to the missionaries employed in foreign lands. To this I reply that commercial houses of agency are to be found in all directions, who receive money and pay drafts upon them with as much readiness from or in behalf of an individual, as they will from a corporate body. The difference betwixt a number of churches remitting monies abroad, and that of a society or board, would be a mere matter of *postage* and not one of impracticability, as some may suppose. Nothing is more easy. The directors of missions find more difficulty in getting the money from the public, than they do in remitting it to the missionaries; the latter trouble never turned any man's hair gray, the former doubtless has in some cases contributed to do so.

4. Another objection may arise, and that is the difficulty of fixing upon proper spheres of missionary labor. This objection disappears when we consider that by the proposed plan there could be no objection against the occupying of the present locations, but especially when we reflect that missionaries are required in every heathen land where they would be tolerated. Shew me a spot on earth where the gospel has not been preached, or is not preached, and there is the spot where we are bound to carry it.

Such are a few of the anticipated objections against the pro-

posed plan. I know of no others which can stand examination. I fear none but such as that pride which courts distinction, covetousness, and the love of the world will bring against it. May the Lord consume such objections with the breath of His mouth and with the brightness of His coming. Prejudice in favor of old established practice may also shake its hoary locks and say, "beware of tampering with that which time has rendered venerable." But let the pile be what it may, the foundation I have proved to be rickety, insecure, and even condemned by the word of God as raised without His authority; and although it has stood for half a century, it ought to come down and give place to one possessing divine authority, upon which missionary enterprize could build upwards and onwards to eternity.

I am well aware, that before the plan I have submitted for the consideration of the people of God can be adopted generally, they must display a higher tone of piety in their souls, and a deeper sense of obligation to the love of God than appears at present. Both are lamentably deficient. That this high tone and that this sense of obligation is deficient in the churches, is however their crime and not their misfortune, and ought to be sought after and obtained without delay. It is not wealth nor membership which we require, but divine influence which is needed to effect this, combined with scriptural views of duty, inducing to a holy consecration, such as our obligations to God should produce, and which His cause demands. Under the views which I have presented of the duty of churches as to the support and propagation of the gospel, this holy consecration is not dependent upon the possession of wealth, but *upon self-denial*, and honorable as this is in the sight of God, it is within the reach of every individual to display it, with but few exceptions. It is testified of the churches of Macedonia "how that in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality."

Some may think the application of such a rule as I advocate as to contributions for the support of the gospel would be grievous and burdensome, but I am convinced it would be found the reverse, and would prove a source of joy and satisfaction to every rightly constituted mind enlisted in the service of the divine Re-

deemer, besides contributing much to the peace and to the harmony of churches.

Let it be distinctly understood by every individual joining himself to the churches of Jesus Christ, that the cause of God in which he is embarked, requires pecuniary support, and must have it in accordance with *the scriptural precedent and rule which regulates the pecuniary contributions of churches*, "*upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as the Lord hath prospered him*," and from the application of which to his circumstances there must be no shrinking nor holding back permitted, "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Such expectations should not be concealed from the membership of churches. They ought to hold a prominent place in all church articles of faith and covenant engagements, and should be forthwith universally adopted, not as a hardship or as a grievance, but as a high privilege. A fifth part of income was required by the benefactor of Egypt for the service of its monarch, for the purpose of maintaining the government of the country. This was far from being an oppressive impost, and when all things are considered, was a wise and a proper one. The Egyptians considered it to be so, for Joseph was hailed as the saviour of the country, and its benefactor; and shall christians grudge a tenth or even a twentieth of their incomes to the service of Him, who hath redeemed them with His own precious blood from the lowest hell, while they behold a heathen nation willingly yielding a fifth of their yearly incomes at the demand of a man who had only saved their lives from famine, and their nation from ruin.

Under the present system of supporting the cause of God and propagating the gospel, too much is expected from the wealthy on the part of those who find it convenient to plead their poverty as an excuse for the smallness of their contributions, but which is occasioned not by their poverty, but by the lack of self-denial. This is an intolerable meanness which ought to be discountenanced wherever it is displayed, and christians ought to know that it is not wealth after all, but self-denial on which dependance should be placed for the support and the propagation of the gospel both at home and abroad. In the exercise of self-denial on the part of christians, all that the world requires to supply its

spiritual destitution can be obtained without difficulty, and a stop put to the present eleemosynary system, which in my humble opinion is as disgraceful to religion as it is pernicious to its interests.

In conclusion, for the members of the various boards and societies employed in the work of conducting foreign missionary operations, I may be permitted to say, I entertain the most profound respect. With not a few of the members of such boards and societies I have had the pleasure of personal acquaintanceship and friendship, and which I hope will continue, and wherever I have labored in the pastoral office I have done all in my power to sustain them and hold them up to public confidence. But I cannot shut my eyes to the conviction that the system of organization pursued by all is not competent for the task it has assumed, and that it has had, and still has a paralyzing influence upon the churches, leading them to delegate to such bodies *their own proper work*, instead of evangelizing the heathen by their direct and personal effort; committing this most important of all duties, next to that of their own salvation, to a delegation such as a missionary board, comprizing a few individuals raised to notoriety by its operation, and possessing apparently a life interest in the important matter of conducting, in a kind of wholesale way, missionary enterprize among the heathen.

Such a state of things as I have pointed out ought not to continue any longer. The churches of Jesus Christ I trust will awake, and shake themselves from the dust of sloth and love of the world, and look no longer on their own things, but every man also on the things of others with the benevolence of Christ streaming from their hearts, till the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose.